

This book is the first career-encompassing monographic study of Philippe Van Snick's oeuvre. It is the result of a very close and long-term collaboration between the artist and a team of researchers and designers. It has been created to serve as an instrument for discovering Van Snick's body of work as a totality. The many red threads it reveals allow us to understand the work in its full coherence as a complete project. Van Snick's artistic production is often known only in a fragmentary way. The larger public still mostly sees him as an abstract painter. This publication reveals he has been experimenting with a wide variety of materials and techniques, such as drawings and works on paper, photography, film, sculptures and works in situ. This extremely rich range of artistic experiments is characterized by a remarkable internal logic and sharpness of vision. This vision is typified by the artist's consistent interest in the principle of duality as a fundamental driving force in his work and life. Both the figurative and the abstract works are at all times closely tied to everyday reality, life and nature. In this way, Van Snick is able to visually gather and often even reconcile individual and universal forces. The accumulation of time incorporated in his work as a whole has generated a very specific, highly moving visual idiom and as a consequence it is now possible to distinguish Van Snick from his generation of peers, the conceptual artists of the early 1970s.

The methodology followed in this book is one of archiving and enlisting data, bringing them in relation to a generous selection of images. This allows for discovering and linking elements from the reality within which the oeuvre developed over the past five decennia. The timeline starts in the mid-1960s and ends today. It offers an overview of the most relevant data that enable an understanding of the genesis and evolution of the work and the context in which it came into being. With meticulous precision and patience, all information has been transcribed from the original sources (letters, invitation cards, books, catalogues, etc.), reflecting the spirit of the epoch by retaining the terminology of the time (such as the use of 'commissioner/curator') and often resulting in different spelling of names. Crucial to this titanic task was the conscious choice to execute this work now, sitting together in Van Snick's Brussels studio while going through the vast amount of available archive materials in order to create a document that holds art historical value and testifies scientifically to what has happened within his fascinating artistic universe from the late 1960s until the present, departing from the very early, formative years.

It has never been the intention of the participants of this study to compose a catalogue raisonné. Nevertheless, this book intends to offer an insightful overview of all the themes and aspects that have been important

to Van Snick throughout his career until the present day. It also reproduces all the important works and series to date, but the latter not always in full. It aspires to record all the individual exhibitions and the most important group exhibitions, as well as the most significant literature that inspired the artist throughout the years. But there is definitely even more to be said than the impressive amount of material that is already gathered here. The book shows the ambition to correct many errors and mistakes that circulate around the work, realizing nevertheless that it is fallible in itself. But it has tried to be as precise as it can, aspiring to bring out as much unknown but important material as possible.

The timeline adheres to a strict chronological order, emphasizing descriptions of facts and works in a way that is as exact as possible. It is complemented by a variety of well-chosen essays, that set out to interpret different aspects of the work in many additional ways. This corpus of text materials should serve as a basis for further study of Van Snick's body of work. All mentioned facts have been double checked with the original documents from the archive and with the artist himself in conversation. The moment has come for us to express our most sincere and warmest gratitude to Philippe Van Snick, for the time and patience he has dedicated to this enterprise, for the generosity with which he has shared his materials with us, opening his entire house to the many national and international researchers that have entered his doors over the past five years. This could not have been possible without the ongoing and continuous emotional and logistic support of his wife, Marijke De Keukeleire.

A book such as this could not have been realized without the efforts of many other people and institutions. We thank CERA, in particular Paul Tanghe and Lies Daenen, for their support of this project from a very early stage. We are grateful for their written contributions to this book, and so are we to the other contributing authors: Hans De Wolf, Alexander Streitberger and Lore Van Hees. In the Museum M at Leuven, Veronique Vandekerchove, Lore Van Hees, Luc Delrue and Eva Wittocx, as well as the guest curator of the exhibition, Luk Lambrecht, were enthusiastic from the start to organize a solo exhibition of Van Snick's work, which coincides with the publication of this book. The Research Platform for the Arts at the Association KULeuven, in particular Yves Knockaert, amply supported the five year trajectory of research that preceded this publication. At various stages during this time period, Wouter Davidts, Rein Deslé, Bart Geerts, Joris Ghekiere, Steven Vandervelden and Pieter Vermeersch were involved in the project. We thank them for their engagement and enthusiasm. At Sint-Lukas Brussels University College of Art and Design, Willem De Greef and Jan Cools followed the project closely and they did not hesitate to offer the necessary support whenever it was needed at crucial moments. Ton Brouwers realized a delicate job in translating the timeline and the essays to English. Esther Rosser also supported the project on

various levels. Jef Geys and Michael Snow generously authorized publication of images. Studio Luc Derycke succeeded terrifically in bringing texts and images together in a fine layout. We thank all of them, and hope that you will equally enjoy reading this book as contributing to further enlivening the precious work and legacy of Philippe Van Snick.